

Notes and Observations

POLYDRUSUS SERICEUS (SCHALLER) (COL.: CURCULIONIDAE) IN SOUTH WILTSHIRE. — Mr. A. A. Allen's note on this species (*antea* p. 182) gives me an opportunity to record its occurrence in Wiltshire, as well as commenting on other records of the weevil in Britain. I beat two female specimens of *P. sericeus* from Hazel (*Corylus avellana* L.) in Blackmoor Copse, near East Grimstead (about six miles east of Salisbury), South Wiltshire, on 25th May, 1976. One specimen retained the right pupal mandible. The site is a nature reserve of the Wiltshire Trust for Nature Conservation and is well known to lepidopterists.

There are several records of *Polydrusus sericeus* in Britain besides those mentioned by Mr. Allen. First, however, it needs to be pointed out that the account of *P. sericeus* in Fowler (1891, *Coleoptera of the British Islands*, 5: 200) is somewhat confused. In Stephens (1831, *Illustrations of British Entomology. Mandibulata*, 4: 143-5, and 1839, *Manual of British Coleoptera*, 248-9) *P. sericeus* appears under the name *Polydrusus speciosus* Stephens. In both works the only locality listed is Kimpton, Hants., whence Stephens had been sent a series of the weevil by Rev. G. T. Rudd. Frederick Smith (1878, *Entomologist*, 11: 171-8) quotes from a letter written by Rudd to Stephens on 1st June, 1829 in which he states that he had "been taking *Polydrosus sericius* [sic.] freely . . . in Littleton Copse". As well as *Polydrusus speciosus*, Stephens, in both *Illustrations* and *Manual*, lists *P. sericeus*. Fowler includes *sericeus* Steph. nec Schall. as a synonym of *P. chrysomela* (Oliv.). Fowler gives a good description of *P. sericeus*, including the differences between the sexes. However, in the second (small type) part of his account the localities of both Stephens' species have been combined. Fowler's statement that "Stephens records that he has found it near London, but that most of his specimens were received from the vicinity of Bristol; in woods near Swansea (Dillwyn)" should refer to *P. sericeus sensu* Stephens (= *chrysomela* (Oliv.)) rather than to *P. speciosus*, the species we now know as the true *P. sericeus* Schaller. Tomlin (1913, *Trans. Cardiff. Nat. Soc.*, 45 (1912) 41-58, and 1916, *ibid.*, 48 (1915), 17-35, and 1936, *Victoria County History of Glamorgan*, 1: 321-5, 347-62) includes the erroneous Swansea "record" of *P. sericeus*, which is attributed to L. W. Dillwyn (MS. lists 1829 and 1848) and not confirmed. Although Dillwyn's *Memoranda relating to coleopterous insects found in the neighbourhood of Swansea* (1829) was stated not to have been published, the paper, running to 75 pages, was privately printed and is a very important early faunal list. In it the name *Polydrusus sericeus* is attributed to Stephens and hence is not referable to *Polydrusus sericeus* Schaller (= *P. speciosus* Stephens). Whether Dillwyn's and Stephens' "*Polydrusus sericeus*" is really *P. chrysomela* (Oliv.), as Fowler believed, is perhaps doubtful, since Dillwyn's eco-

logical note "Among herbage in woods, not common" is not typical of *P. chrysomela*, which is a saltmarsh species. Possibly the matter could be resolved by reference to the Kirby collection (in British Museum (Natural History)). Dillwyn's *Materials for a fauna and flora of Swansea and the neighbourhood* (1848) does not mention *P. sericeus*, an indication in itself, since this list records only the rarer species of Coleoptera and might have included *P. sericeus* Schaller if Dillwyn's insect had really been that species.

J. C. Dale was another early entomologist who was supposed to have taken *P. sericeus*; but his record from Glanville's Wootton, Dorset, has never been confirmed (Pearce, E. J., 1926, *Proc. Dorset nat. Hist. antiq. Fld. Club*, 47: 51-128).

A record of the weevil from Folly Farm, Marlborough, North Wiltshire is included in the anonymous *Handlist of the Coleoptera of the Marlborough district* (1939) and may or may not be genuine.

Besides the Hampshire localities mentioned by Mr. Allen, all of which are in the northern vice-county, there are two records from the southern one. Forbes (1874, *Entomologist*, 7: 112) took *P. sericeus* in Crab(b) Wood, Winchester, and Killington (1927, *Trans. Hamps. ent. Soc.*, 3: 45-50) found it at Baddesley (near Romsey).

Finally, I must comment on Mr. Allen's supposition that *P. sericeus* is excessively local in Kent. The occurrence on one particular cherry tree in the late Dr. A. M. Massee's garden has the ring of a true "Dr. Massee story" about it, but whether this should be regarded as a leg-pull or hyperbole emphasising the rarity of the weevil is not for me to say. However, Dr. Massee himself (1948, *Rep. E. Malling Res. Stn.* for 1947, 136) recorded *P. sericeus* as "locally common on fruit trees, also plentiful on strawberry" and also referred to it on cherry (1946, *ibid.* for 1945, 92-3). I found *P. sericeus* several times in Oaken Wood, East Malling, in 1960 and 1961, most plentifully on 30th June, 1961, and mostly by beating Hazel. It occurred occasionally on apple trees in the "Upper Grub" orchard of East Malling Research Station in 1959, 1960 and 1961. I also took a specimen on the North Downs at Shoreham on 13th June, 1959.

In summary, *P. sericeus* has been reliably recorded from five vice-counties: East Sussex (where I, too, have taken it with Mr. P. J. Hodge), East Kent, North and South Hampshire, and South Wiltshire. The North Wiltshire record perhaps needs to be confirmed. — Dr. M. G. MORRIS, Orchard House, 7 Clarence Road, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 2HF.

AUTOGRAPHIA GAMMA L. AND NOMOPHILA NOCTUELLA D. & S. IN S. DEVON IN 1977. — *A. gamma* totals were: 1st-30th June (m.v. trap in use 27 nights), 11; July (29 nights), 61, with 10 on 13th; August (23 nights), 93, with 16 on 20th. Total, 1st June to 24th August, 165. *N. noctuella*: total nil. These totals are the lowest I have ever recorded. — H. L. O'HEFFERNAN, c/o 12 Frith Road, Rondebosch 7700, S. Africa.